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Hague wins Tory leadership

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The sun never sets on the beach

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Sources: Iran, Hizbullah plan to hit Israeli, US, Turkish targets

By STEVE RODAN

Iran has decided in coordination with Hizbullah to attack Israeli, Turkish, and US targets following Mohammed Khatami's election to the Iranian presidency, diplomatic sources said this week.

The sources said that on June 2, the Hizbullah Shura met in Beirut and decided in conjunction with its Iranian advisers to plan attacks against Israeli, Turkish, and US targets both in the Middle East and abroad. The Shura is said to be the forum where Hizbullah policies, particularly its terrorist plans, are discussed.

Martin Kramer, director of Tel Aviv University's Dayan Center for Middle East Studies, said the reports could be saber-rattling by the Syrians and Iranians, upset by the new military-supported Turkish government of Tansu Ciller, which is due to replace the Islamic-oriented Necmettin Erbakan. Kramer said both Syria and Iran appear to be concerned by the rise of the pro-US Ciller to



Labor Party leader Ehud Barak (right) meets with Tel Aviv Mayor Ronni Milo in Ramat Gan yesterday amid speculation that Milo would leave the Likud following the resignation of Dan Meridor as finance minister. Both men said the meeting had been arranged before the resignation. (Israel Sun)

Sharansky, Edelstein to boycott cabinet

By LIAT COLLINS, SARAH HONIG, and Tim

Industry and Trade Minister Natan Sharansky declared yesterday he would boycott today's cabinet meeting for the second week in a row, joined by Yisrael Ba'aliya colleague Absorption Minister Yuli Edelstein, in protest at the government's failure to honor its coalition agreement.

The move follows the failure of meetings between Yisrael Ba'aliya representatives and Prime Minister's Office Director-General Avigdor Lieberman to achieve progress on the issue. It also comes as the opposition is mobilizing in an attempt to bring down the Netanyahu government in three no-confidence motions to

Israel wants France to broker Lebanon withdrawal

By ELDAD BECK

PARIS - Israel has asked France to help broker an agreement with Lebanon that would enable the IDF to leave the security zone, according to sources in the entourage of Defense Minister

PM: Coalition will thrive

By SARAH HONIG

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu yesterday dismissed all talk of his coalition disintegrating, saying it would survive and function well for its full four-year term.

He also promised to overhaul the economy and put it on the world map. Netanyahu said that "in three years you won't recognize this country, it will have changed so much - for the better."

Netanyahu was addressing members of the Likud secretariat, who gave him a warm reception, despite the fallout following the resignation of Finance Minister Dan Meridor.

Speaking about the coalition, Netanyahu said: "There are those who would like to bury it at every turn, but it will thrive and all of its component parties will remain within it."

"When it comes to basics, they are not at loggerheads with this government's policy and agree with our foreign affairs and defense line, as well as with what we are aiming to do in the socio-economic sphere."

"Inside the Likud, I find it hard to believe that our members will revert to the internecine factionalism of yesteryear. They will remember how we shattered

Ministerial hopes for Ne'eman dim

By SARAH HONIG

The chances that former justice minister Ya'acov Ne'eman would return to the government seemed to dim last night, and it appeared likely that two new Likud ministers would be coopted.

However, sources stressed that the final word on Ne'eman has still not been said. He returns from the US today and might express a wish to return to the cabinet. In that case, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu will face the problem of where to put him.

Sources in the Prime Minister's Office, however, feel that National Infrastructure Minister Ariel Sharon would be promoted to the Treasury, Tourism Minister Moshe Katsav would be promoted to National Infrastructure, MK

I.B. Singer's 'Nobility' gets a grave correction

By MARILYN HENRY

misery about the grave. Israel Zamir, Singer's son from a marriage in Poland, has said that if the writer had been buried in Israel, the grave would have been the destination of pilgrimages. The New Jersey site, he wrote in his book *Journey to My Father*, is a "God-forsaken place [that] would attract no one."

NEW YORK - Nobel laureate Isaac Bashevis Singer is no longer "noble." Nearly six years after Singer's death, the inscription on his gravestone in a Paramus, New Jersey cemetery was corrected this week. The original stone, which was engraved in 1992, called the Yiddish writer a "noble" laureate. *The New York Times* reported. Singer won the 1978 Nobel Prize for literature.

Singer's friends and family apparently were divided about the error. Some thought the gravestone typo was an insult, while others found it amusing.

"Isaac would have enjoyed the irony," said Eve Friedman, who with Singer wrote the play *Tebele and Her Demon*. "But there was something kind of sad about it. Isaac in that stone was the butt of a joke," she told the *Times*.

The correction doesn't end the

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The friendly majority

MOSHE ZAK

Dan Meridor's resignation from the Finance Ministry has been the big story this week. But we should not allow it to overshadow an important display of American friendship for Israel.

It came on June 10, wrapped up in the vote by 406 members of the House of Representatives for a resolution that calls upon the president and the secretary of state "to affirm publicly, as a matter of US policy, that Jerusalem must remain the undivided capital of the State of Israel." (Only 17 members of the house were opposed.)

TRUE, administration officials take pains to stress to the Palestinians that it is the president

The whole world's against us? Don't you believe it!

who lays down policy and not Congress, and that is no more than the truth; but the administration will not be able to ignore Congress's unambiguously-stated position on Jerusalem.

while the ambassador in Tel Aviv is accredited to Israel's government in Jerusalem.

The administration will do its utmost to delete those paragraphs detailing the practical measures recommended by Congress. But it cannot disregard the spirit in which they were made.

Our government, in neglecting the consulate issue, implied that it was of little significance; it therefore fell to 406 congressmen to take the matter into their hands.

There are those who will try to dampen any enthusiasm for last week's friendly vote. But we must not allow them to sow panic by citing the UN General Assembly's anti-Israel votes on Har Homa, or other condemnations of Israel by other international bodies.

The weight of the Congress vote is incomparably greater than any UN Assembly decision could be.

In its resolution, the House of Representatives praises the Israeli administration in Jerusalem over the 30 years since the city's unification. It says: "The Congress strongly believes that Jerusalem must remain an undivided city in which the rights of every ethnic and religious group are protected, as they have been by Israel during the past 30 years."

So it isn't true that the whole world is against us. That friendly majority on Washington's Capitol Hill is stronger than the knee-jerk majority in New York's UN building, which can always be relied upon to support any proposal condemning Israel.

Arafat's throwing stones in Hebron won't alter American public opinion. Congress in effect said as much last week.

The sooner the PA leader shakes off the intoxication induced by those other votes against Israel and rid himself of the illusion that he can isolate us, the sooner he is ready for compromise, the better his chances of profiting from the negotiations will be.

The writer, a veteran journalist, comments on current affairs.



Peace

and Egypt), continue to hold, and opportunities have been... lingering political issues... president and CEO of largest industrial... I have long felt that the... community has a duty to... e the peace." Then was... pose of my visit with... the minister and many... visits to Jordan.

Applying the lessons of Bar-On

ALLAN E. SHAPIRO

How is Benjamin Netanyahu applying the lessons learned from the Bar-On Affair? Let's hope that the current crisis over monetary reform is not an example.

Did Netanyahu stage the Caesarea showdown with Dan Meridor Monday night despite the fact that the finance minister was due to leave that evening for an urgent meeting with US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and Crown Prince Hassan, or because of it?

Did Meridor's opposition to the Bar-On appointment enter into it? There is more than a slight suspicion that the foreign currency account is not the only one that Netanyahu is interested in settling. All's fair in love and war, and especially in politics.

The euphoria induced by the High Court decisions on Sunday brought out the killer instinct on Monday.

If Netanyahu misunderstands the High Court judgments in the Bar-On Affair and thinks that he has been cleared, the court itself is partly to blame. In a series of decisions, it has created the impression that sitting in judgment on the political process has become a judicial function.

Hence, when the court declines to intervene, as in Bar-On, there is a misapprehension that the politicians have come out clean.

Even express declarations in the opinions that the court was deciding on only the criminal, not the normative aspects of the case, went largely unreported.

Justice Yitzhak Zamir went so far as to add to one of his opinions a section entitled "On Law and Ethics." In it, he warns against going too far in turning ethical norms into legal rules.

An excess of legal prohibitions in public life, Zamir maintains, would be difficult to enforce, and would remain on the law books as dead letters. The enforcement of ethical norms in the public life, he declares, is the function of the political process, with the ultimate accounting at election time.

In one of Sunday's High Court cases, Zamir authored the principal judgment rejecting a petition to order the government to create a judicial commission of inquiry to go into the non-criminal aspects of the Bar-On Affair. This was a return to a position Zamir had taken more than three decades ago during the Lavon Affair.

David Ben-Gurion, then out of government, had demanded a judicial commission of inquiry, a demand that in 1968 led to the present law on investigatory commissions. Instead, the justice minister, Pinchas Rosen, set up a cabinet committee of seven ministers,

which he chaired, to investigate the so-called "mishap" of 1954, a disastrous army intelligence operation in Egypt, followed by a cover-up involving perjury, suborning of witnesses, and the falsification of documents.

The committee of seven cleared Ben-Gurion's nemesis, Pinhas Lavon, the former defense minister, of all responsibility. Rosen asked Dr. Yitzhak Zamir, then a young law lecturer at the Hebrew University, for an opinion.

Zamir concluded, in a 67-page opinion, that the government had

If Netanyahu thinks that he has been cleared in the affair, the High Court is partly to blame

the discretion to refuse to appoint a commission of inquiry under the prevailing law, and was within its rights in opting for the committee of seven.

AS in his 1965 opinion on the Lavon Affair, so in his present judgment in Bar-On: Zamir upholds the refusal of the government to appoint a judicial commission of inquiry.

However, under the present law, he declares that the negative decision of the government is subject to judicial review, and would be reversed by the High Court if it went beyond the realm of reason.

The range of discretion that the government enjoys on such a matter is so broad, he contends, that it is difficult to imagine a concrete case in which the court would reverse a decision of the government not to go the judicial investigation route.

In the Bar-On matter, Zamir points out that "there are few affairs that were investigated so thoroughly by the police." That leaves open precisely the area Zamir delineates as the ethical one, in which the police presumably have no role to play.

Ethical purity, however, is a legitimate area of concern for the state comptroller, where governmental action is concerned. A report by the state comptroller can trigger the creation of a judicial commission of inquiry.

This was the case with the Bejski Commission, which investigated the rigging of the stock market for bank shares, following the report of then state comptroller Yitzhak Tukik.

From Ayyash to McVeigh

STEPHEN M. FLATOW

The debate will now begin over whether Timothy McVeigh truly deserves to die for the murder of 168 men, women, boys and girls in Oklahoma City.

Sure, the jury has spoken, twice now. The penalty is in line with Federal law. The horror of the crime is beyond measure or comprehension.

Sounds like a lock on plunging a needle into McVeigh's arm one day.

But will that needle ever reach McVeigh? Should it?

Moral opposition to the death penalty has already come from Bishop William S. Skylstad, chairman of the US bishops' Domestic Policy Committee, who believes executing McVeigh "would tragically perpetuate a terrible cycle of violence and further diminish respect for life...."

The law itself is untested; its constitutionality has never been reviewed by the United States Supreme Court.

Cost, too, becomes an issue. Is it worth the \$3 million in taxpayer-funded legal fees that it will cost as the verdict and penalty are appealed through the legal system, compared to the \$1 million it will cost to keep McVeigh in prison for the rest of his life?

Moral and legal opposition and financial considerations aside, is

there another reason that McVeigh should not be executed? Is there a lesson to be learned by others, not from his death but from his life - one to be spent, as long as he lives, behind bars?

Each spring, Arab youths in the autonomous territories stage a mock bombing attack using a cardboard cutout designed to resemble an Israeli bus.

We know it's an Israeli bus, because we have seen them all too often on the TV news: blown apart, twisted, with missing windows and blackened frames and an Israeli soldier looking through the wreckage for God knows what.

This annual mock attack is staged to mark a "great victory" over hapless folk riding the bus to work, to school, or a brief vacation in the Gaza Strip.

It also commemorates the death of the suicide bomber - the martyr for the cause of Palestinian freedom - who takes his own life

along with his victims'. That is the way to meet Allah, so potential suicide bombers are told. Last year, when notorious "Engineer" Yihye Ayyash, responsible for dozens of deaths in Israel, met his end via a booby-trapped telephone pressed to his ear, his

have seen glory in his own death. Maybe the absence of glory is enough to stop the next impressionable Arab youth from packing dynamite around his waist or in a shopping bag and walking onto a bus or into a crowd at an outdoor cafe.

EXECUTE Timothy McVeigh, and again we run the risk of creating a martyr - the same way that David Koresh and Waco became a fixation for McVeigh.

Execute Timothy McVeigh, and his photograph will go up on the bedroom walls of skinheads and in the dark meeting rooms of white supremacists and anti-government militias around the US.

If Waco was a harbinger of McVeigh's act in Oklahoma City, why let his execution serve a similar purpose for some other sick mind?

If, on the other hand, we let McVeigh live for the rest of his life in prison, there is no glory, there is no martyrdom. And, possibly, there will be no more attacks against Federal office buildings.

I think it is worth the gamble. The writer is the father of Alisa Flatow, who was killed in a terrorist attack near Kfar Darom on April 9, 1995.

Government

Government... Netanyahu... Bar-On... High Court... Justice Yitzhak Zamir... David Ben-Gurion... Pinchas Rosen...

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Hague wins Tory leadership

News agencies

LONDON (AP) - Ex-Welsh Secretary William Hague, 36, yesterday won the leadership of Britain's Conservative Party, becoming the party's youngest leader in 200 years.

Hague, from the center-right and an opponent of Britain ever joining a single European currency, defeated ex-Treasury chief Kenneth Clarke, the party's leading pro-European in a third round ballot by 90-72 votes.

John Major stepped down as leader within hours of the Conservatives' crushing defeat in the May 1 election at the hands of Tony Blair's Labor Party.

Hague, 36, clinched victory after winning the backing late Wednesday of former prime minister Margaret Thatcher, the standard-bearer of the right wing.

Hague, now leader of the opposition, faces a daunting task in trying to rebuild the party, traumatized by its landslide defeat by Labor after 18 years in power.

The scale of the Tory defeat was due partly to splits over closer relations EU, particularly right-wing demands to rule out Britain joining the single currency.

Lady Thatcher did not have a vote in the ballot but remains an influential figure in the party right-wing.

Hague won despite a stumble



William Hague (Reuters)

Monday when he said he would insist the party's top spokesmen rule out joining a single currency for a decade.

That stipulation may eliminate Clarke - who rates nationally and among grassroots activists as the most popular Conservative - from the party hierarchy.

A national survey of chairmen of local party branches released Thursday by Tory headquarters showed Clarke with support from 389, compared to 260 for Hague.



Turks out

Iraqi trade unionists with a portrait of Saddam Hussein protest in front of the Turkish embassy in Baghdad yesterday, calling on Ankara to withdraw its troops from northern Iraq. The Turks are on a mission to crush Kurdish separatists who keep their bases inside Iraq as they fight for independence from Turkey. (Reuters)

Turkish president assesses PM candidates

ANKARA (AP) - President Suleyman Demirel yesterday sounded out political leaders before designating a successor to modern Turkey's first Islamic premier.

Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan resigned to thwart pressure from the military, which was angered over his attempts to put a stronger Moslem stamp on society.

Erbakan was hoping that his Islamic-oriented Welfare Party could remain in power by staying in a coalition with the center-right True Path Party. True Path's leader, Tansu Ciller, would serve as premier, according to his plan.

The outcome depended on Demirel, who has said he would act quickly.

Demirel met first with main opposition leader Mesut Yilmaz, head of the conservative Motherland Party.

Yilmaz offered himself as an alternative to Ciller, saying he

could govern without the Islamic party's support. Demirel was leaning toward that option, Yilmaz told reporters after the meeting.

"The country needs a government to protect (the secular) system ... and we are ready to take responsibility," he said.

Neither True Path nor Motherland alone can muster enough votes for a majority in Parliament, which must approve the government. Mrs. Ciller and Yilmaz are bitter rivals and are unlikely to join forces themselves to keep out Welfare.

Under an agreement between Erbakan's Welfare and True Path, she would lead the country to early elections within four months.

But several obstacles remained. Tradition calls on Demirel, an independent, to designate the leader of the main opposition party - Yilmaz.

Mrs. Ciller similarly may have trouble gathering enough support.

Although she has the outside support of a small ultra-nationalist party which gives her a majority backing in Parliament, defections from her own party may prove troublesome.

It was also unclear if the new setup would be satisfactory for the generals.

Erbakan angered the secular establishment with his attempts to allow female civil servants to wear Islamic outfits and a decision to change working hours to fit fasting hours during the Islamic holy month of Ramadan.

Aside from such symbolic moves, the generals also were outraged by heightened calls for an Islamic regime at rallies and in speeches by Welfare deputies.

The military issued its first ultimatum to Welfare in February. After Erbakan appeared defiant, it got harsher and warned that it would crush the Islamic political movement with the use of arms if necessary.

Jospin program angers Right

PARIS - Over angry shouts by conservative lawmakers, Socialist Premier Lionel Jospin yesterday proposed a 4 percent rise in the minimum wage and vowed to block the selloff of public services.

In his first National Assembly speech since his leftist coalition came to power in a stunning June 1 parliamentary runoff victory, Jospin also promised to revamp the former right-wing government's tough immigration laws.

"The French made a choice full of hope but heavy with demands," Jospin said. "We want to give a precious thing back to the country ... a meaning." Jospin had been under pressure from the Communists in his coalition to grant the rise in the minimum wage, currently at about 6,400 francs (\$1,100) a month.

In proposing the 4 percent increase, Jospin called it "the strongest rise in buying power over the past 15 years for that salary level."

Conservatives, shouting repeatedly during the speech, howled in their loudest protest.

Jospin said he opposed privatizing public sector industries "with-

out justification in the national interest." Alluding to the phone company France Telecom, he mentioned telecommunications, electronics and "other sectors." But Jospin underlined that "adaptation will be necessary to maintain our level among the most developed nations of the world."

Jospin proposed a plan to build 100,000 dwellings and renovate 1 million others to expand housing and fight record 12.8 percent unemployment. He also called for an increase in student aid but stopped short of other new programs pending a study of the state budget to be completed next month.

The new premier, with whom conservative President Jacques Chirac must now share power, won the vote by blasting the conservatives' inability to cut the jobless rate with market-oriented policies of curbing spending and business taxes.

Instead, the left hopes to stimulate job-creation by putting more money in employees' hands and by cutting the work week to spread jobs around.

(News agencies)

'McLibel' decision makes hamburger of activists

LONDON (Reuters) - After the longest trial in English legal history, two penniless activists were found guilty of libelling hamburger giant McDonald's and ordered to pay £60,000 (NIS 350,000) in damages yesterday.

Judge Rodger Bell found that the statements in a six-page pamphlet published by Helen Steel, 31, and Dave Morris, 43, in 1984 that McDonald's was responsible for starvation in the Third World, destruction of rainforests and for selling unhealthy food "injured the plaintiff's reputation." But other allegations that the fast food group's advertising was exploitative of children, that it was responsible for cruelty to some animals and that it paid low wages were accurate, he said.

"The majority of the defamatory statements I found to be untrue. Others were true," Judge Rodger Bell said in his two-hour summation of the "McLibel" case that attracted worldwide attention.

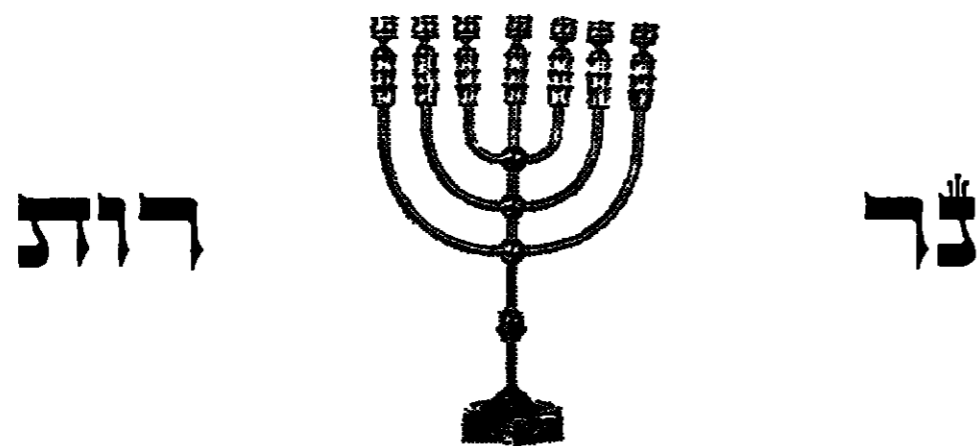
Both sides claimed victory after the judgement. "For the sake of our employees and our customers, we wanted to show these serious allegations to be false and I am pleased that we have done so," Paul Preston, chairman of McDonald's Restaurants Ltd (UK) said in a later statement.

Morris and Steel, who conducted their own defense during the 313-day trial after being denied state legal aid, said the trial had vindicated McDonald's critics.

"Despite the overwhelming odds ... the judge has found McDonald's guilty of exploiting children, of cruelty to animals and of having an anti-union attitude," Steel said.

"We wanted to show by example you can stand up to even the most powerful adversary," said Morris.

The crusading pair vowed to take the case to the European Court of Human Rights to challenge English libel laws: Because they have no money they could not pay the damages, they added.



RUS ELISHEVA

bas

HARAV CHAIM OZER CHAIT

We are grieved by the sudden and tragic loss of Rus. We mourn together with the Chait and Zwick mishpachot.

Her chesed and ahavas Torah will act as an everlasting light which will continue to burn in our hearts.

K'lal Yisroel has suffered the loss of a true bas Torah. We will not forget her.

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In deep sorrow, we announce the passing of my dear wife, our mother, sister, grandmother and great-grandmother

ESTHER CHAIT

Daughter of Reb Baruch Mordechai Wolkovitch ז"ל

The funeral will take place today, Friday, June 20, 1997 (15 Sivan 5757) at 11:00 a.m., at the new Rishon Lezion cemetery.

We shall meet at the cemetery entrance.

Shiva at the "Ad 120" retirement home, Apartment 2, 40 Smilanski, Rishon Lezion.

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SYLVIA GAFFEN

on June 18, 1997

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Dave and Rosie,
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Grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren

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The rise and fall of an 'outsider'

As soon as Dan Meridor became a threat to Binyamin Netanyahu, his fate was sealed. **Herb Keinon reports on the roots of a showdown**

A whiny milquetoast without a trace of backbone is the Dan Meridor image perpetuated over the last year by the popular satirical show, *Hartzuf*. Meridor's puppet is the "wing" who can't stand up to anyone, the nebbish at the beach who, if you just blow hard enough, will simply wither away.

This week Prime Minister Netanyahu blew and blew, but Meridor stood his ground. Meridor the *hartzuf* never puts up a fight; Meridor the man showed that he can.

Granted, he lost. In fact, he received a drubbing - going from the lofty Finance Ministry into the proverbial political desert. But at least he freed himself of his *hartzuf* image.

Ben-Gurion and Sharett, Peres and Rabin, Shamir and Levy - just a few of the duos in Israeli politics who, for long periods of time, couldn't stand one another. Netanyahu and Meridor have now earned their rightful spot on that list.

The prime minister, as he made clear in the various post-fight interviews he granted, would have us believe that the battle over the "diagonal mechanism," which restricts fluctuations in the shekel exchange rate, was a legitimate disagreement between those charting the country's economic strategy.

But Meridor, in his own interviews, said that economics was the rationalization for the battle, not the reason. "It is strange to me that he [Netanyahu] began to be interested in the diagonal mechanism and the safety bands. In my eyes this does not seem real. It is very strange," he said.

The real reason for the fight, he intimated, was an attempt by the prime minister and "those around him" - a reference to Prime Minister's Office Director-General Avigdor Lieberman - to settle political accounts.

ON THE surface, said Ronit Vardi, author of the just-released book on Netanyahu titled *"Bibi: Who are you, Mr. Prime Minister?"* the two men have much in common. They are close in age; Meridor is 50, Netanyahu, 47. They both grew up in Jerusalem, their fathers were both involved in Revisionist politics. They both reached the rank of captain in

the army. There, she said, the similarities end. Whereas the Meridor family was well-accepted in all sectors of society, Netanyahu's family was not even accepted by all those on the Right.

"Netanyahu's father was part of the small Jabotinsky circle on the Right," Vardi said. "They were not even accepted by the Irgun circle. While they were the outsiders, Meridor's family was very much on the inside."

This inside-outside dichotomy became even greater when the Netanyahu family left the country in the 1960s for an extended stay in the US.

"Netanyahu grew up in an American milieu," she said. "Meridor was very much the Israeli."

The same dichotomy was true within the party. Meridor worked his way up from within the Likud, becoming the cabinet secretary to Menachem Begin in 1982, a Knesset member in 1984, and justice minister in 1988.

Netanyahu, on the other hand, leaptfrogged over the party apparatus. Like Meridor, he began his political career in 1982, when then-Israeli ambassador to the US Moshe Arens plucked him out of relative obscurity to become his deputy in Washington. When Meridor became a MK in 1984, Netanyahu became the UN ambassador. And when Meridor became justice minister in 1988, Netanyahu took his seat as a freshman MK.

In an attempt to move into the Likud's mainstream, Vardi said, Netanyahu tried to get Meridor's brother, Salai, to be his spokesman at the UN. "He was looking for a way to get into the center of the Likud," she said, and saw Meridor as a way to help him in. Salai, who had just begun a stint as a Betar emissary in the US, turned him down.

WHEN Netanyahu returned to Israel in 1988, the "war of the camps" within the Likud was at its height. Both Netanyahu and Dan Meridor were part of the Shamir-Arens camp, which also featured the Likud "princes," the name given to that group of rising Likud stars who were grooming, and being groomed, to take control of the party: Benny Begin, Ehud Olmert, Roami Milo, and Meridor himself.

"Meridor and the other princes looked down at Netanyahu, had little respect for him, held him in disregard," said Rivlin, for years a central figure in the Likud's Jerusalem branch, who knows both Netanyahu and Meridor well.

"Netanyahu resented Meridor for being part of the party's elite, and for being the darling of the country's elite."



Televised clash: Meridor's nebbish 'hartzuf' challenges Netanyahu's.

(Yoni Hanouchem)

first septet in the party's convoluted system of drawing up its Knesset list, ensuring him a cabinet post if the party won.

The party, however, was clobbered. As a result, the long-simmering showdown between Netanyahu and the princes came about earlier than expected - in the 1993 primary race for the party's new leader. Meridor bowed out of the race, in deference to Begin, his close ally. He also threw his support behind

Meridor and the other princes looked down on Netanyahu, while Netanyahu resented Meridor for being the darling of the country's elite.

-Likud MK Ruby Rivlin

one of Netanyahu's staunchest supporters in the Likud Central Committee. "They saw themselves as the heirs to [Yitzhak] Shamir, and felt threatened by Netanyahu."

And for good reason, as it turned out. Netanyahu - the outsider, the newcomer, the former furniture salesman - took the central committee by storm, and was voted by the committee into the party's eighth slot on its Knesset list, higher than Begin (13) or Meridor (15). The die for future antagonism was cast.

As time wore on, the princes had more and more to fear from Netanyahu, whose rise in the party was meteoric. In the 1992 primaries to determine which 50 Likud candidates would be placed by the central committee on the Knesset list, Netanyahu came in second, well ahead of Meridor, who finished 16th. He also made it onto the prestigious

when the surveys were showing Netanyahu badly trailing Labor candidate Shimon Peres, there was a campaign run mostly through advertisements in the newspapers calling on the Likud to dump Netanyahu, and replace him with Meridor. The name closely linked with this campaign was Geshet's David Magen, who - along with Meridor and Begin - now constitute the opposition to Netanyahu within Likud-Geshet. The Netanyahu camp viewed this as an attempted coup.

"Meridor," Avigdor Lieberman said in a newspaper interview at the time, "is seeking to sabotage the agreement with Tsomet. As always, he leaves the dirty work to others to prepare a coup against Netanyahu."

Meridor's people, for their part, claimed that prior to the primaries for the Likud's Knesset slate, Netanyahu circulated lists of preferred candidates, and pointedly left Meridor out of them. It was within the context of this bad blood that Meridor's willingness to appear on the Likud's 1996 campaign and voice support for Netanyahu was seen as no small accomplishment, as a sign of peace between the warring camps. It was an illusion.

After the elections there were three issues that further strained relations. The first was the very appointment of Meridor as finance minister. Netanyahu's first choice for that job was Bank of Israel Governor Jacob Frenkel. But in the bungled handling of the ministerial appointments - Netanyahu promised too much to too many - the prime minister was given an ultimatum: Either Meridor receives the Finance, Foreign Affairs or Defense portfolio, or

neither Meridor nor Begin would sit in the government. Netanyahu capitulated.

"This was a brutal way to get the ministry," Rivlin said. It was also a horrible way to start the newest phase of the already complicated Meridor-Netanyahu relationship.

The next strain came in the form of the Brodet Report, recommendations by former Finance Ministry director-general David Brodet on reforming

for those involved in the matter to look inward and try to figure out how this grave failure came about."

Sadly, said Rivlin, the person who lost the most from the Bar-On Affair was Dan Meridor. In this interpretation of events, Meridor was targeted by the prime minister because of their long, difficult history, which culminated in Meridor's comments on the affair.

Vardi, however, has a somewhat different interpretation. "The whole thing was not to get back at Meridor, but rather to gain complete control of the party," she said. "I don't think Netanyahu mixes emotions in his political decisions. It's not a matter of jealousy. He understood since the end of the 1980s that his main enemies in the Likud are Begin and Meridor. [Infrastructure minister Ariel] Sharon is not a threat, because Sharon is older."

"He knew that he had to fight them. In 1993 he beat Begin, and now he has taken care of Meridor. He has now established himself as the only real Likud leader."

If Vardi's interpretation is indeed correct, and this is the way Netanyahu disposes of his political opponents, then Yitzhak Mordechai - considered now the most realistic challenger to Netanyahu from within the party - would do well to watch his back.

ent lidates

Although she has the support of a small ultra-nationalist party which gives her a majority in Parliament, her own party may be subsistence.

It was also unclear if the tap would be satisfactory for Israelis.

Erbakan angered the secular establishment with his attempt to flow female civil servants' Islamic outfits and a decision to change working hours to fit the Islamic month of Ramadan.

McLibel decision makes hamburger of activists

LONDON Activists who were arrested in England for protesting against the export of nuclear weapons to Iraq have won a landmark ruling in court.

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Victim of the establishment?

Is Gregory Lerner the fall guy in an Israeli conspiracy to get the Russians? A segment of the Russian community thinks so, Larry Derfner reports

I think the old-line Israeli elite is using the Lerner case to hurt Yisrael Ba'aliya and the Russians, although I don't know who exactly is behind it," maintains Simon Feldman, a journalist for the Russian-language newspaper *Novosti Nedeli* ("News of the Week"). "The elite is fighting a war because it fears competition from us. [For instance] Israeli professors are afraid that Russian immigrant professors are going to come into the universities and compete for their jobs."

Cries of "harassment" and "stigmatization" are spreading through Israel's Russian immigrant community as police broaden their investigation of suspected Russian mafia leader Zvi Ben-Ari, formerly known as Gregory Lerner. (He was jailed about a month ago on suspicion of major fraud and involvement in a murder in Russia, and of trying to bribe Israeli bank officials and politicians to further his multimillion-dollar economic interests here.)

Dov Kontorer, a columnist for the largest Russian-language newspaper, *Vesti* ("News"), said much of the Russian-language press, especially the smaller weeklies, features "very belligerent opinion pieces [on the Ben-Ari case] that accuse the Israeli establishment and police of trying to bring down every successful Russian politician and businessman. They claim that the Israeli elite doesn't want to let the Russians compete fairly in society, so it goes after Lerner and Yisrael Ba'aliya. I can't say that this is the dominant opinion in the Russian press, but it is definitely heard."

Yisrael Ba'aliya MK Yuri Stern, reportedly due to be questioned by police in the case, gave an alarming hint of the mood among Russian immigrants when, interviewed on Israel Television last weekend, he claimed the Ben-Ari affair was the latest move by the Israeli elite to "keep out the Russians, the Mizrahim, the haredim - anybody who isn't

one of them." He was quoted in *Ma'ariv* as saying, "If this treatment continues, we'll double our [current seven] Knesset seats in the next election." Stern's prediction was almost a precise echo of MK Aryeh Deri's forecast of what the Bar-On Affair would do for Shas.

Is Zvi Ben-Ari the Russians' Aryeh Deri - a criminal in the eyes of most Israelis, but a martyr in the eyes of most of his ethnic group? "A comparison can certainly be made between Lerner and Deri, in part because the claim that they are victims of persecution by the establishment is incorrect in both cases," said Kontorer, who describes himself as a "moderate" on the issue of Israeli discrimination against Russian immigrants, a bread-and-butter topic in the Russian-language press.

Kontorer suggested that Russian immigrants' attitudes on the Lerner investigation depend to a considerable extent on how successfully they themselves have integrated into Israeli society. Those who have gotten good jobs, good housing, are satisfied with their children's education, and identify with Israel tend to trust that the police are doing their work honestly, and that Ben-Ari might indeed be a criminal.

But many of the less successful, more resentful Russian immigrants who live a "ghetto" existence among others of their kind are convinced that Ben-Ari is the fall guy in an Israeli conspiracy to get the Russians.

At the Iv-Russ Russian-language bookstore on Tel Aviv's Allenby Street, clerk Sonia Maximov, 53, who came here four years ago from Moscow, said in halting Hebrew that Ben-Ari has been the victim of a "presumption of guilt" on the part of the police and the Israeli media.

"He shouldn't be called a mafioso. The courts have to rule on that," Maximov said, noting that she gets most of her news from the Russian press, but also from Israeli TV.



While the Hebrew press depicts Zvi Ben-Ari (Gregory Lerner) as a mafia king, some Russian-language newspapers portray him as a victim. (Jonathan Bloom)

She said the Ben-Ari case increased the stigmatization of Russian immigrants.

"A lot of Israelis think all Russian men are criminals and all Russian women are whores. Maybe the Israeli intelligentsia doesn't think like this, but many working-class Israelis do," she said.

At the nearby Don Quixote Russian-language bookstore, Antonina Levintant, 24, who immigrated five years ago from Moscow, said her main worry about the Ben-Ari affair was that the Russian mafia is too widespread and powerful in Israel for the police to contain it.

"There are so many of these types of people here. I'm familiar with this sort of thing from Russia," she said, noting that the Don Quixote was torched three months ago, "and we don't know who did it or why."

With her Hebrew slang and hip elegant black outfit, Levintant seemed fully integrated into youthful Tel Aviv society. She



Is Zvi Ben-Ari the Russian's Aryeh Deri - a criminal in the eyes of most Israelis but a martyr in the eyes of his ethnic group? (Israel Sun, Ariel Jeruzolimski)

reads *Yediot Aharonot*, not the Russian press. She said the notion of a plot by the Israeli elite to oppress the Russians via Ben-Ari had never entered her mind.

But she understands how others readily latch on to the conspiracy theory: In a word, she



explains it as self-pity. "This store is like a psychological clinic; I must talk to a hundred Russians a day. They complain all the time, as if everything is so hard for them here. But believe me, they don't suffer as much as they claim."

THE EFFECT of the Ben-Ari probe has been to increase the stigmatization of Russian immigrants. But it's another thing to suggest - as many Russians do - that this is its purpose.

Feldman is currently on a month's suspension from *Novosti Nedeli* over an opinion piece he wrote accusing Israeli Police investigators of teaming up with antisemitic Russian police against Ben-Ari and the Russian immigrant community.

Feldman was also criticized for maligning Israeli Sephardim as the immigrants' enemies, but he denies this was his intention. "What I did write was that there are many Israelis who hate Russian immigrants, just as there are many antisemites in Russia," he said.

Whatever Feldman's intention, the Israel Police threatened to sue *Novosti Nedeli* for libel, but dropped the threat when the newspaper printed an apology. "There are many, many articles on Lerner in the Russian

newspapers that are much harsher than mine was," Feldman noted. "The smaller Russian-language weeklies generally cover the case 'with a lot of passion, but little factual information,' Kontorer said.

But even *Vesti*, the most "Israeli-oriented" of the local Russian-language papers, reprinted a column written in Russia by Alexander Bovin, the previous ambassador to Israel, which charged that the Ben-Ari investigation "was part of an international effort to stop Russia from integrating into the global economy," Kontorer said.

While Yuri Stern's assessment of the case's value in Knesset seats was likely a hopeful exaggeration, Kontorer said the affair "isn't hurting Yisrael Ba'aliya's popularity at all." As for what the investigation will do for Ben-Ari's own reputation in the community, this won't be known until his legal fate is decided.

Kontorer, who thinks the evidence against Ben-Ari is very weak, guesses that he may eventually get convicted on a minor charge, or possibly even escape indictment altogether, which would leave him "not badly off" in the court of Russian-immigrant public opinion. "But if he is brought to trial and found innocent," Kontorer maintained, "then he's going to come out of this thing a hero."

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مكازم العمل

Return to Oslo

The ambassador of the country that hosted the secret Oslo talks is heading home. Sven Erik Svedman speaks to Jay Bushinsky about Norway's role in the peace process

Roving ambassadors usually dart from country to country, dropping in on kings, presidents and ministers, but Norway's outgoing envoy to Israel, Sven Erik Svedman, oscillated between Tel Aviv, Gaza and Jerusalem, often covering 180 kilometers a day in his official four-wheel-drive vehicle.

The 50-year-old diplomat functioned here as the Oslo Accords' godfather, constantly checking implementation and, above all, supervising the Palestinian Authority's use of the \$200 million aid program allocated by the Norwegians for the first five years of the PA's existence.

Svedman, a tall and youthful Scandinavian whose veneer of amiability and diplomatic elegance cover a sinewy and realistic understanding of Middle Eastern politics and culture, was in on the secrets of Oslo from the start.

As minister and deputy chief of mission at Norway's embassy in Washington, he was aware that Israeli and Palestinian representatives were conducting clandestine talks in his nation's capital under the personal auspices of his chief, the late foreign minister Johan Jorgen Holst.

"The Americans knew something was going on, but they didn't know exactly what it was," he recalled.

He also remembered their attitude when Norway's role became clear. At first, his State Department contacts were surprised and skeptical, but not miffed or resentful, he said.

Some expressed astonishment that a country as geographically and historically remote from the Middle East as Norway would dare play the role of peacemaker. "We know the region well," he was told by his American counterparts, "but do you?"

Ireland, Guatemala and elsewhere to seek out its diplomatic skills.

Svedman inadvertently revealed the impetus for the Norwegian initiative when he flashed back to his nation's relatively short, but dramatic, history.

Norway was under Danish rule for 400 years, beginning in the 15th century, and then entered into a union with Sweden which lasted from 1814 to 1905. These political arrangements may have been benign and even convenient in material terms, "but they were not viable from the standpoint of national identity," he said.

"You can unleash negative forces by sacking to integration."

The implication was clear. The Palestinians' national aspirations seemed to be on the tip of his tongue. At the very least, Norway could understand their yearning for self-determination.

And then he came out with a concept in political science which demands serious reflection: "The smaller the state, the more preoccupied it is with national identity, sovereignty and independence." All this, he said, while speaking of Norway being a country of only 4.2 million inhabitants, but one whose independence is the sine qua non of its existence.

He attributed the country's ability to produce an Israeli-Palestinian agreement to the fact that Norway had good relations with both parties - with Israel since 1948 and with the Palestine Liberation Organization since its admission to the Socialist International in the mid-1970s.

Norway also had a unique insight into Israel's national ethos because it was conquered and occupied by Nazi Germany during World War II and because it is a young nation in chronological terms, he said.

"We could identify with the Jewish struggle," he added, noting that "there is



Signing of the Israel-PLO accord in Washington, September 13, 1993. Norway paved the way.

(Bramm/Harari)

joining the late prime minister Yitzhak Rabin, then-foreign minister Shimon Peres and PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat on the plane that took them to the Nobel Peace Prize ceremony. "We were working with a government that was part of Oslo - one which literally was Oslo!" he said.

"After the new [Likud-led] government was elected and confirmed that it wanted to carry Oslo forward, we respected the democratic choice of the Israeli electorate."

But once the Oslo Accords were born, Norway's role changed, Svedman said. "There no longer was any need for secret negotiations," he said. "The parties met often and with the public's knowledge, while our role shifted more toward the economic field."

Ultimately, Norway became the main coordinator of the international aid that was bestowed upon the Palestinians, facilitating monetary transfers and keeping abreast of its utilization in the Gaza Strip and West Bank.

"We have a representative office in Gaza which is monitoring our aid program and we are satisfied that the Palestinians are doing their utmost to clarify these fiscal issues," he said. He expressed total confidence in the two special panels set up by the PA to this end.

"There have been problems, but they have been isolated and solved," insisted Svedman. He would not address the issue of fiscal irregularities that led to the resignation of the PA attorney-general. A PA report concluded that more than \$40 million had vanished from the account books and that much of it may have ended up in private Palestinian hands. Svedman would only say that from now on "there must be transparency - that it should be possible to see where the money is going - and accountability where we can monitor usage."

On the other hand, he considers other economic problems crucial to the PA's success: the effect of periodical and prolonged



Outgoing Norwegian Ambassador Sven Erik Svedman

(AP)

border closures on the Palestinian inhabitants' livelihoods and the "lack of contiguity" between the two

1,400 Jews who lived in Norway before the war, half were deported to the death camps and most of them perished there, while the other half were transferred to the safety of neutral Sweden. Recently, a commission was established consisting

"Oslo doesn't preclude anything. It's just a continuous framework in which both sides can consider their needs and rights."

—Svedman

"After the new [Likud-led] government was elected and confirmed that it wanted to carry Oslo forward, we respected the democratic choice of the Israeli electorate."

—Svedman

NORWAY'S initial success lay in producing the seminal Oslo Accords.

The ambassador rejects the notion that the Oslo Accords impose any specific political arrangement on the parties. "Oslo doesn't preclude anything," he said. "It's just a continuous framework in which both sides can consider their needs and rights."

"I believe in it because there is no alternative."

The Oslo Accords catapulted Norway into the first rank of the world's troubleshooters and led contending parties in

enormous interest in Israel in Norway."

This fascination evidently is nurtured in Norway's schools.

He remembers two maps on the classroom walls during his days as a student, one of Norway and the other of Israel. The reason: Norway's state religion, Lutheranism, required that Norwegians be familiar with the Holy Land, where Christianity was born.

SVEDMAN'S two-and-a-half-year stint as Norway's envoy to Israel began in an atmosphere of euphoria. He remembers

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"A general feeling of disappointment and depression abounds."

— Rivka Michaeli



"I prefer to pack my things and go to a place that I care less about. Then it just won't hurt me."

— Shaika Levy



"During terror attacks Levy stayed in the country and now he wants to leave."

— Sefi Rivlin

Leave 'em laughing or just leave?

It's not often that the country's president invites you over for a drink to talk about your problems. But that's what happens when part of a national institution threatens to leave the country.

Shaika Levy, one of the three members of the legendary Hagashash Hahiver — the most celebrated comedy team in the country's history — wasn't joking last week during a bitter interview with *Yedioth Aharonot's* local newspapers, in which he declared that since the assassination of prime minister Yitzhak Rabin and Binyamin Netanyahu's election he didn't feel he belonged in Israel anymore, and that he was seriously considering emigration.

The day after the interview was published, President Ezer Weizman phoned Levy and invited him to "Come over, sit and talk to me over a glass of whiskey or coffee. I want to know what pains you."

It's nothing new for prominent entertainment and cultural figures who identify with the Left to pronounce their dissatisfaction with government policy when the Likud is in power. But few mainstream figures express their disgust as bluntly as Levy did.

"I prefer to pack my things and go to a place that I care less about," he said in the newspaper interview. "Then it just won't hurt me. I'll see what's going on in Israel on CNN. I'll go to Las

Vegas, stay there, buy myself a house cheaply; it's not expensive there. A clean place, a quiet place, a relaxing place, with a cultural life. I won't get upset anymore."

Coincidentally, just a few days afterwards, local rock idol Aviv Gefen, currently living in London, told the *Observer* newspaper that he had chosen to live abroad for political reasons.

"When I was in Israel I could see the blood and smell the gunfire. When they started to shoot in the name of God, I knew that

"Since Rabin's assassination, the light has gone out, the well is empty."

— Shaika Levy

Israel was not a place to live. The right wing there wants to turn Israel into Iran," Gefen said, choosing not to stress, as he had in the Israeli press, that he was in England to pursue an international music career.

Gefen's words might have been strong, but were not shocking; he is certainly not the first young Israeli rocker to seek success abroad and he has built a career on breaking taboos and

Comedian Shaika Levy shocked many last week when he said he felt like leaving the country. How black is the mood among entertainers? Allison Kaplan Sommer reports

fighting the establishment.

But Levy's interview came as much more of a surprise. No 20-something rock artist like Gefen, he is a 56-year-old entrenched member of the cultural and entertainment establishment, who wields considerable power as the chairman of EMI, the national performing artists union.

Now, suddenly, Levy has declared that it is impossible for him to create comedy when he is so depressed about the direction in which the country is going and in which he "goes to sleep every night feeling helpless."

"It is not the same country since Rabin's assassination," he said. "Look at what is happening with the religious. Look at what is happening with the violence. Look at what is happening to tolerance. With the peace negotiations. Nothing. It doesn't exist. Everyone has retreated to his own side. As if the whole business is about to shut down tomorrow..."

"When Rabin was around, there was a relaxed feeling. We were going in a direction where there was a light at the end of the

tunnel. I said to myself: there are problems, but we're going in the right direction, we have a goal. But now the light has gone out, the well is empty."

He complained that "People who are different from me, who think completely differently from the way I think, are running the country. They are making decisions and I cannot do anything about it. That's democracy, but it is sad and very difficult..."

"You look at your prime minister and you say: He doesn't belong to me. He isn't an Israeli at all. He doesn't belong to us, he belongs to America... A prime minister of Israel who aspired to an American passport? People are dying in all kinds of military operations and he wanders around skiing in I-don't-know-where? Where have you heard of such a thing? The man does not belong to us. He is not one of us."

Levy attributes much of his sense of doom to the growth of the religious Right — "a bigger problem than the Arabs" — and fears their power and influence will only strengthen as they become a growing proportion of the population. That influence has and will hurt the cultural life as well as the political direction

of the country, he added.

IS THE mood truly so black among those who make their living laughing, singing, writing and otherwise keeping the nation entertained? Among much of the entertainment and cultural community, the answer is yes.

Comedian and talk-show host Rivka Michaeli says that Levy said publicly what she has heard privately: "a general feeling of disappointment and depression abounds," she says.

She believes that women performers in particular fear being "controlled and dictated to" by religious forces, which she says form "an ideological threat" and will want to tell them when and where they can perform, what they should wear and whether or not to sing.

"And moreover, look, Sinead O'Connor won't come to Israel because she is feeling threatened — what does this say? That anyone who identifies with peace, with the Palestinian people, can't come here because their life is in danger? What's next?" she asks.

Musician Shlomo Gronich said he also discerns a "desperation, fear, and helplessness that didn't exist in the past... I understand

and sympathize with what Shaika Levy said... what is happening is very frightening and if the situation doesn't change very quickly, we can find ourselves in a country we don't know."

Author A.B. Yehoshua makes a distinction between the current malaise and opposition to past Likud governments.

"Listen, with [Menachem] Begin, with Golda [Meir], even when we opposed them, there was a vision, a hope that we would get to the top of the mountain and talk to the Palestinians and there will be

"Does Shaika mean to say he enjoyed the days when buses were exploding and people were dying?"

— Sefi Rivlin

peace.

"Well, now it feels as if we were at the top of the mountain, and then we came down again... we had a dream and it was realized... now we seem to be sliding backwards, and there is frustration and depression, as if something beautiful has been contaminated."

"Many people, including me, are very tired of the political struggle, and don't have the strength to start again. What do we fight for? To talk to the PLO — well, we talk to them — Bibi talks to Arafat. Give them a state? Well, they are flying their flag.

"But still it all seems to be going wrong — we're going backwards, but not back to where we were before — to a new, scarier place."

TO BE sure, not every performer

or artist rallies around Levy. Fellow comic Sefi Rivlin, who identifies with the right of the political map, says that Levy, who he considers to be a good friend, "didn't make me angry by what he said, but certainly shocked me and definitely disappointed me."

"Does Shaika mean to say that he enjoyed the times we were having a few years ago when the country was subject to terrorist attacks and buses were exploding and people were dying? During those times he stayed in the country and only now he wants to leave?" he asked.

Rivlin objects strongly to many of Levy's comments, most particularly to his attacks on Netanyahu and his government.

"What is this business of Bibi not being 'one of us?' For goodness sakes, Ben-Gurion was from Russia, Begin was from Poland, Golda Meir had an American accent. Were they foreigners? How many generations was Ehud Barak's family living in Israel? Not many more than Bibi's, that's for sure."

"And how can you say that when times are tough you can't write comedy? I bet if you did an analysis of the best work of the Gashash, you'd find that some of their classic material was written when times were very hard — just before the Six Day War, just after the Yom Kippur War. I just don't buy it; you can write funny material during hard times when what is going on politically upsets you, and there are other times when things are wonderful and fine and you still can't write."

Ever the entertainer, the quick-witted Rivlin couldn't resist making a quip. "Well, I guess if he leaves the country I have to go, too. I'm a member of EMI, after all, and I have to follow my chairman. Bye-bye."

As for Levy himself, in the wake of the media storm around him, he left for an extended vacation in the south of France. Presumably, he purchased a round-trip ticket.

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مكازم الأهل

MIDDLE ISRAEL



By AMOTZ ASA-EL

Real nobility is based on scorn, courage, and profound indifference...

YET MERIDOR also embodies the local equivalent of nobility in the more technical sense...

A VIEW FROM NOV



By MOSHE KOHN

By the time you read this, I hope the spokesmen of all sectors of Orthodox Jewry will have joined their non-Orthodox counterparts in vigorously and categorically denouncing the idolatrous behavior of several dozen godless hooligans...

King Saul returns

And so, it is perhaps no coincidence that accumulating power - not to mention actually exerting it - never seemed to thrill the baby-faced Jerusalem attorney...

Yes, hovering in the background of the Netanyahu-Meridor relationship there was a true policy issue to be settled...

Any moron can understand what really lurked behind that sudden resolve and change of course, particularly with it coming after a year in which the prime minister repeatedly ignored, humiliated, double-crossed and outflanked his finance minister.

The highlights of those maneuvers included robbing the Treasury of its responsibility for state companies; deleting items from the budget to placate populist coalition partners...

FINALLY, PUSH came to shove and Meridor, the ultimate prince, decided to throw in the towel and do what he had done as an armored-corps officer...

Desert cave, merely ripped away a piece of his pursuer's uniform, and otherwise refrained from touching him.

Netanyahu, having been crowned by a terrorism-stricken public thirsting for a strongman, is indeed our very own King Saul. Not in terms of that peasant's sensitivity - if anything, in his frequent moments of conceit he seems more like Nero fiddling above the Rome he has set ablaze...

Saul was originally a modest man, but the increasingly popular, post-Goliath David instilled in the first Israelite monarch a jealousy he could not contain...

Dry Bones



SHABBAT SHALOM



Parasha: Beha'alotcha

Daily dedication of the menorah

By SHLOMO RISKIN

"And God spoke unto Moses, saying: 'Speak to Aaron and say to him, 'When you light the lamps, the seven lamps shall illuminate the menorah.'"

The second chapter of Zechariah - discussing the dedication of the menorah, or candelabrum, at the establishment of the Second Temple - serves not only as the haftara of this week's portion of Beha'alotcha, but also as the haftara of Shabbat Hanukka.

tongs, and its pans and all its oil vessels..." (Num. 4:9) He explains that if the menorah's sections could not come apart, the Torah would not speak of the candlestick and then further catalog the lamps, cups and tongs. In his words: "They would be part of the menorah, and there would be no need to detail them."

Of 'heretics' and idolators

which our ancestors indulged en route from Egypt to the Promised Land (Sanhedrin 60b and 64a; Bemidbar Rabba 20:23; Numbers 25:3, 5; Hosea 9:10; Psalms 106:28 et al);

an act of provocation." Deputy Religious Affairs Minister Yigal Bibi resorted to the outrageous "if" and waseled a slap on the wrist to the hooligans: "If [the 'heretics'] held a mixed service and spoiled the holiday for the regular worshippers, then it was a provocative act. But still, people shouldn't take the law into their own hands."

Old City and the feces-throwing pupils of the Porat Yosef Yeshiva in the Old City, the doyen and once the pride of Jerusalem's Sephardi yeshivot. Now we know how the latter spent the night.

Describing the Western Wall as "the Jewish people's holiest place," as Jerusalem's Deputy Mayor Haim Miller (Agudat Yisrael) did in justifying the hooliganism, is to falsify history and affirm a widespread misconception that has made the stones of the Wall objects of idolatry.

What law? What law of the land did those non-Orthodox Jews violate, what provocation did they stage, by conducting a service far from the regular prayer section?

ON THE Monday before Shavuot, Shas staged a mass revival meeting in Tel Aviv. One of the main speakers was Rabbi David Yosef, son of Shas' nestor and former Sephardi chief rabbi Ovadia Yosef.

"The Jewish people's holiest place" is not the Western Wall but the Temple Mount, specifically the area that in antiquity was occupied by the Temple and the Holy of Holies. The Western Wall is part of what remains of the wall Herod king of Judea built to retain the fill he had poured to broaden the compound. It is the closest our politicians, and therefore also our Chief Rabbinate, permit us to approach the site of the Temple itself.

If they did transgress, have we now handed over the maintenance of law and order to "bothered" vigilantes? For that matter, what heinous halachic sin, what grave offense against God, did they commit?

Yosef Jr. delivered a harangue that surely must have done his father proud. Claiming that since the founding of Shas "half a million Jews have returned to the tent of Torah," he added, "Half a million secularists use drugs. So see what is in the scales: our half-million penitents vs. their stoned half-million."

Be that as it may, those "heretical" worshippers, if they are indeed guilty of heresy, were nowhere near the Wall. I hope that by this reading we shall have heard especially from the spokesmen of that sector of Orthodoxy who identify themselves as "haredim ol' dar Hashem" for God's word" (Isaiah 66:2; see also Ezra 10:3 and II Kings 4:13), in whose garb those hooligans were disguised.

After the police intervened, those worshippers of Mercury and Peor went on a general rampage against Arabs and Arab vehicles and business premises in the Old City, in the course of which they also hurled stones at Border Police.

Yosef's words seem quite clear, unambiguous. According to Shas chairman Aryeh Deri, his words should not be taken at face value: "Rabbi David Yosef didn't mean to offend anyone. Actually, he called for national unity and reconciliation. They are all our brothers. The secularists need not feel frustrated or offended as a result of Rabbi David Yosef's words."

Whatever one may think of the Conservative and Reform approaches to God or observance, there is no justification for the behavior of those pseudo-haredim idolators wearing masks of Torah. Those who are truly haredim in Isaiah's sense and believe that the sum of Torah is Hillel's lesson of common decency and civility must reject with revulsion the excuse offered by Miller, "When something goes wrong, you, you, sometimes lose control" (Ha'aretz, June 12).

Some of them also attacked a young Jewish couple in the street near the Damascus Gate. The man wore a crocheted kippa and the woman wore a blouse bearing the emblem of the late Rabbi Meir Kahane's Kach organization. But this "didn't prevent the attack," the Ha'aretz reporter fatuously added.

Deputy Health Minister Shlomo Benizri, Shas chairman Aryeh Deri's alter ego, challenged the veracity of the reports of the incident, saying, "There is no doubt in my mind that no haredim harmed any vehicles on the holy day."

I call them idolators for two main reasons: An ancient Roman form of idolatry was throwing stones at the statue of the god Mercury, and dropping one's feces before a shrine to the Moabite god Baal Peor was another form of idolatry, in

He called the story about the attack against the non-Orthodox worshippers "poppycock."

Joining in that Shavuot idolatrous fantasia were denizens of some of the city's Ashkenazi haredi neighborhoods near the

Vertical text on the left margin: "The Jerusalem Post", "Attacks Left Country and Leave?", "Sefi Riskin", "Artist rallies around...", "Christian missionaries...", "Sefi Riskin", "Attacks Left Country and Leave?", "Sefi Riskin", "Artist rallies around...", "Christian missionaries..."

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SHARANSKY

Continued from Page 1

Barak, who held consultations in his Tel Aviv office last night with 11 other Labor MKs, including former party chairman Shimon Peres, has also decided not to join a Netanyahu government under any circumstances. Labor faction chairman Ra'anan Cohen is initiating meetings with members of the Third Way and Yisrael Ba'alya to try to persuade them to support the motions of no-confidence submitted by Labor, Meretz, Hadash and the Democratic Arab Party. "Even in the coalition, the understanding and recognition of the need for new elections is becoming sharper," Cohen said. Although no-confidence motions are usually heard on Mondays, an exception has been made next week, because they would clash with the scheduled Likud internal elections. The motions will be heard on Tuesday instead. Both Cohen and coalition chairman Michael Eitan are calling on MKs who are abroad to return for the vote, and announced the cancellation of all "pairing-off" agreements between absent opposition and coalition MKs. MKs have also been told to cancel foreign trips next week. Meretz faction chairman Haim Oron said he will monitor the no-confidence votes to decide whether to go ahead with a Meretz bill calling for the dissolution of the Knesset and early elections. It is due to be heard on Wednesday. Oron, who submitted the bill, said: "This is the only way to publicly test the declarations of coalition MKs who have said that they have lost faith in the prime minister. The only way out of the political and moral crisis we are in is to dissolve the Knesset and hold early elections." Perhaps the most worrisome development for Netanyahu yes-

terday was the fact that MK David Re'em (Likud) announced he is launching a campaign called "Yes to the Likud, no to Bibi." Re'em said that "should the opportunity arise to bring down the government and call early elections, I would vote against the government, and I am sure that with a new leader the Likud would win the elections. Netanyahu has been disloyal not only to his friends, but also to the Likud ideals. He has decided to rid himself of the true Likud representatives, which is why he fired Benny [Ze'ev] Begin and then he fired Dan Meridor and who knows who he'll fire next - [Defense Minister] Yitzhak Mordechai and [Communications Minister] Limor Livnat, maybe. He fires anyone he dislikes." Health Minister Yehoshua Matza took Re'em to task yesterday, wondering "where he came up with these absurdities. Netanyahu never fired Begin, who left [the government] to protest the Hebron agreement. Meridor quit over an economic issue, no one forced him to quit." Re'em, however, refused to undertake that he would indeed vote against the government in the confidence motion before the Knesset next week. Meridor himself also refused to say what he would do in that vote. But in theory the in-house opposition to Netanyahu now numbers four - Begin, Meridor, David Magen of Gesher, and Re'em. This brings the Netanyahu coalition down to a dangerous 62 out of 120 MKs - 61 votes are needed for a no-confidence motion to pass. If the motions pass, new elections would have to be held for both the Knesset and the prime minister. Some 20 no-confidence motions have been defeated since the government took office last year.

NE'EMAN

Continued from Page 1

Hanegbi reiterated yesterday his emphatic refusal to switch portfolios. "If the prime minister does not want me to serve in my present capacity, it will be no disaster. I don't have to be in the government. I can serve as an ordinary MK and I will be a loyal one," Hanegbi said. "I will support the government," he said. Hanegbi denied that he was given the portfolio on condition it would be returned to Ne'eman should he extricate himself from his legal travails, as he did. Strengthening the Likud representation in his cabinet should help Netanyahu dissipate the storm caused by Dan Meridor's resignation. However, at least one source claims that Ne'eman is inclined to return to the government, a fact which could stymie Netanyahu's next plan. Netanyahu would like to wrap up his cabinet reshuffle as soon as he can to prevent any further instability to his coalition. The Meridor resignation encouraged talk of early elections from several quarters yesterday and triggered insurrection by MKs who feel their individual power has increased as the overall size of the coalition diminishes. Some of this rebellious spirit may be evident at today's cabinet session, which some ministers promise will be stormy. The ministers who were absent from the special Tuesday cabinet session at which Meridor resigned - Yitzhak Mordechai, Limor Livnat, and Yitzhak Levy - are expected to attend today's meeting. Mordechai has already told Netanyahu's aides that he will back him. Meridor's resignation went into effect early this morning, exactly 48 hours after it was tendered.

IRAN

Continued from Page 1

Khatami is scheduled to enter office in August. Diplomatic sources said Syria has also entered into the offensive. As the Shura members were meeting in Beirut, the sources said, Bashar Assad, the son of President Hafez Assad, met with Hizbullah leader Hassan Nasrallah. The sources said the two men decided to attack Turkish targets. The sources said they did not know whether action against Israel was discussed. Hizbullah has tried to promote joint Arab action against Turkey and Israel. Nasrallah, the diplomatic sources said, recently informed his colleagues in the Shi'ite organization that Iran, Syria and Iraq have decided to cooperate to help radical Islamic opposition groups in Turkey. Nasrallah said Hizbullah would participate in this campaign, but was not specific. The decisions of joint Arab action against Turkey come as Syria has decided to open its border with Iraq after 17 years. The border was closed when Baghdad severed relations with Damascus, which supported Iraq during its war with Iraq in the 1980s. Douglas Davis adds from London: The Arabic-language media are alive with interest over the developing rapprochement between Syria and Iraq. It is believed the Syrians are being impelled by the perceived threat of an Israeli-Turkish alliance. They are said to be moving cautiously in an attempt to avoid ruffling Washington's feathers, while simultaneously focusing Washington's attention on Syrian needs. Developments so far, however, have been sufficient to alarm Iraqi dissidents who had sought a safe haven in Syria and are now seeking refuge elsewhere.

FRANCE

Continued from Page 1

According to the sources, Israel is requesting that the Lebanese government take full responsibility for the security situation on its side of the border by moving its army into the security zone. Israel also wants a clear guarantee for the safety of South Lebanese Army soldiers and their families. The sources said that Richard promised to raise the request with the government and that the French defense establishment would examine all its aspects. In recent months, the French press has reported that former Defense Ministry director-general David Ivry, a senior adviser to Mordechai, has been conducting a series of secret meetings here with members of the French defense establishment about an arrangement in south Lebanon in which France would be involved. After his meeting with Richard, Mordechai said that he had asked the French to examine ways in which they could assist the peace process between Israel and Lebanon. "I didn't speak about specifics," he said. "I noted that France has close ties with Lebanon, and also the ability to influence the Lebanese and the Syrians."

GRAPEVINE



Michal Isaacs (left), Yossi Siyas, and Sara Netanyahu

Power brunch

By GREER FAY CASHMAN

For her gala birthday brunch on at the Dan Pearl Hotel, Jerusalem, insurance broker Michal Isaacs, who chairs the Professional and Career Women's Forum, asked guests not to bring gifts but to give donations to Life Line (Kav LeChaim), an organization which devotes itself to caring for sick children, especially those with cancer, cerebral palsy and muscular dystrophy. Among her many friends who generously responded to the cause were Sara Netanyahu, who noted that one of the most important mitzvot in Judaism is helping the sick, Life Line president and wife of the interior minister Ahuva Suissa, Tzipi Ishai, wife of the minister of labor and social affairs, MK Naomi Blumenthal, Ludmilla Tichon, wife of the Knesset Speaker, prominent lawyer and socialite Tami Raveh and most of the capital's social elite. Even though it was a Friday morning, most of the guests arrived on time. Stella Hadas, wife of former Foreign Ministry director-general Yossi Hadas, attributed the punctuality to the fact that Jerusalem housewives no longer knock themselves out to prepare for Shabbat. With ready-made foods so easily available, they just pick up what they need from the take-out stores and have more time to spend on their own pleasure. Men were few and far between. Even Israel Isaacs, who heads the Jerusalem Economic Forum and does almost everything in partnership with his wife, was absent on this occasion. However, Life Line founder Turvia Levenstein did make an appearance to explain how much pleasure the organization was able to provide sick children through its summer camps here and in the US. Radio personality Yossi Siyas was also present.

Popescu was slightly peeved because he was one of several new ambassadors who presented their credentials at the same day as Bogdanov, with only the Russian ambassador receiving media attention. South African ambassador Frank Land and his wife Maatchen did a split roster. He went to the Russian do, while she attended the Philippines reception where he joined her towards the tail end. Other latecomers to the Philippines event were nattily-attired Justice Minister Tzahi Hanegbi, who obligingly gave the local paparazzi a series of photo opportunities, and casually dressed Tel Aviv Mayor Ronni Milo, who, when propelled forward by property developer and newly appointed Philippines Honorary Consul Alfred Akkroy, apologized profusely for his tardiness, saying "better late than never."

BETTER late than never was equally appropriate to the reception hosted earlier on the same day by Australian ambassador Ian Wilcock and his wife Tamara for Paul Morawetz, the initiator of the Hepzibah Menuhin Chair at the Rubin Music Academy. The reception, which was originally to have been hosted by Wilcock's predecessor Peter Rogers, was deferred when Morawetz took ill. As it happens, Wilcock went to school with the guest of honor's son, David, so it was more fitting for him to do something for Morawetz. But more than that, Wilcock is a collector and accumulator of, among other things, concert programs. In 1962, he went to a concert given by Hepzibah and Yehudi Menuhin and kept the program, which is still in mint condition. It now belongs to Morawetz, who, though a resident of Australia, described himself as rootless but able to feel at home anywhere in the world. Since he was born in Austria and educated in Prague, Austrian and Czech ambassador Jiri Schneider were also present.

IT almost looked as if the Supreme Court had transferred from Jerusalem to Ramat Gan as Supreme Court President Aharon Barak and his colleague on the bench, Justice Zvi Tal, rose to "hood" retired Supreme Court Justice Prof. Menachem Elon on the occasion of his receipt of an honorary doctorate from Bar-Ilan University. Also present at the on-campus ceremony was State Attorney Edna Arbel. The keynote address was delivered by Attorney-General Elyakim Rubinfeld. Honorary doctorates were also awarded to Industry and Trade Minister Natan Sharansky, Yale University Professor of Child Psychiatry, Pediatrics and Psychology, Dr. Donald J. Cohen, Torah scholar Rabbi Yosef Kapach and philanthropists Lorenz Cederbaum of Germany and Mira Koschitzky of Toronto.

AN INFORMAL reunion of members of Junior Hadassah will be held this coming Sunday, June 22, at the ground-breaking ceremony for the new sports complex at the Meir Shefya Youth village. The event, which will be held in the presence of Deborah Kaplan, former National President of Hadassah, will have special significance for Chana Levi (formerly Hilda Snyder) and Tzivia Rabiner (formerly Harriet Lieberman), who, as participants in the first Zionist Youth Leaders Year in Israel course held in 1947-48, spent part of the program in Meir Shefya.

IT APPEARS that US President Bill Clinton is not the only celebrity draft dodger. According to a Reuters report, Harrison Ford, in the July edition of *Movieline* magazine, admits to having avoided the draft during the Vietnam War by claiming to be a conscientious objector - a role which doesn't quite gel with his heroic movie image.

BRULIK



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by DOSH

CRYPTIC CROSSWORD

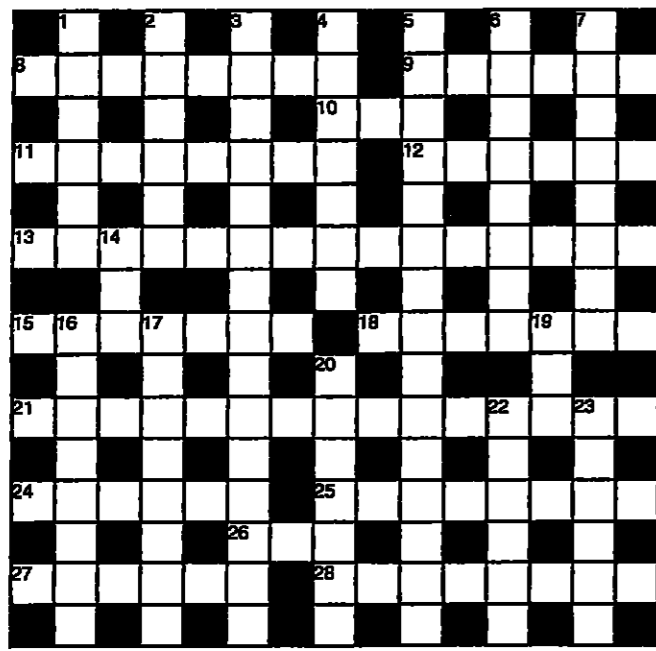
ACROSS

- 8 Wrecker is a brute, so vicious (8)
9 Instigator of rising is to abandon the North (6)
10 I shall shortly be sick (3)
11 Demand for attention gets angry response (4,4)
12 Presumably it's not even a curiosity (6)
13 To meet threat, he'd get prepared—with such full defence? (5,2,3,5)
15 Women on move to tiny crescent (3,4)
18 To begin, the French are shy (7)
21 Showing natural poise, working men not abhorrent (2,5,6,4)
24 Female should have resisted strongly (6)

- 25 The main sign of a polluting spillage (3,5)
26 Starts to take extremely alcoholic drink (3)
27 One that's engaged is some ruffian, certainly (8)
28 Little creature dropping in the water to grab a pound (8)

DOWN

- 1 Party is hard work (6)
2 Volume that's better (6)
3 The pick of sitting Members of Parliament? (6,9)
4 Italian city street I wander round (7)
5 Everywhere in disarray (3,4,3,5)



SOLUTIONS



Yesterday's Quick Solution
ACROSS: 1 FUL, 3 Lately, 9 Under, 10 Brigade, 11 Tie, 13 Terrified, 14 Polka, 16 Elated, 18 Prejudice, 20 Cat, 22 Regaled, 23 Sober, 25 Shedding, 26 Eddy.
DOWN: 1 Fank, 2 Lid, 4 Auburn, 5 Trivial, 6 Realistic, 7 Yielded, 8 Fret, 12 Colleague, 14 Papyrus, 15 Squallid, 17 Hidden, 19 Easy, 21 Tardy, 24 Bid.

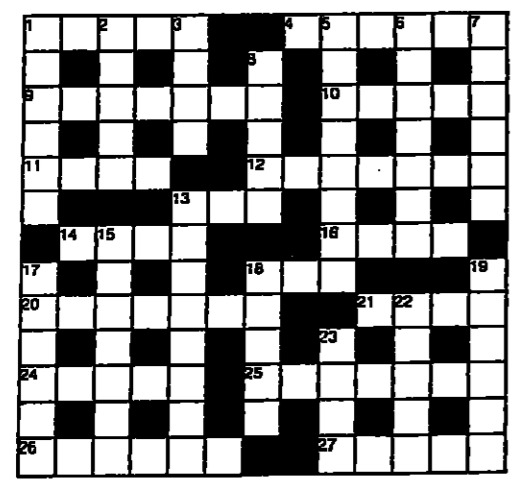
QUICK CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- 1 Brief (5)
4 Alteration (6)
9 Umpire (7)
10 Shunned person (5)
11 Astirred in (4)
12 Style (7)
13 Trifle (3)
14 Perfumed flower (4)
16 Seaweed (4)
18 Container (3)
20 Large feline (7)
21 Celebrity (4)
24 Love affair (5)
25 Voting papers (7)
28 Dwell (6)
27 Good friends (5)

DOWN

- 1 Astute (6)
2 Present for sale (5)
3 Conservative (4)
5 Steersman (8)
6 Dozing (7)
7 Making mistakes (6)
8 Muscular (5)
13 Tattered (8)
15 Burdensome (7)
17 Cream cake (6)
18 Attractiveness (5)
19 Joints (6)
22 Card pack (5)
23 Article (4)



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Table listing Israeli stocks traded in New York, including AMEX and NASDAQ indices and individual stock prices.

Table listing Israeli stocks with columns for Last, Change, and Last Change.

Table listing Israeli stocks with columns for Last, Change, and Last Change.

Table listing Israeli stocks with columns for Last, Change, and Last Change.

TASE ROUNDUP

Investors watch reaction to interest-rate cut

Mishtanim 296.39 -0.14%

Maof 305.54 -0.09%

Investors in Israeli stocks will be watching the financial market's reaction to the Bank of Israel's interest-rate cut...

Investors will be watching the market's reaction to the government plan, said Ella Golan, chief analyst at First International Bank of Israel...

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MISHTANIM LEADING 100 TASE ISSUES

Table listing the top 100 TASE issues.

Table listing TASE issues with columns for Last, Change, and Last Change.

Table listing TASE issues with columns for Last, Change, and Last Change.

Table listing TASE issues with columns for Last, Change, and Last Change.

INTERNATIONAL SHARES

Table listing international shares.

Table listing international shares with columns for Last, Change, and Last Change.

Table listing international shares with columns for Last, Change, and Last Change.

Table listing international shares with columns for Last, Change, and Last Change.

NEW YORK MARKET INDEXES

Table listing New York market indexes.

WALL STREET WEEK

Dow falls just short of record

NEW YORK (Reuters) - Blue-chip stocks went higher yesterday, bouncing back strongly from three straight sessions of lower closes...

average ended up 58.35 points at 7,777.06, standing just below its record closing high of 7,782.04 set on June 13.

OTHER MARKET INDEXES

Table listing other market indexes.

DOLLAR CROSSRATES (US)

Table listing dollar crossrates.

US COMMODITIES

Table listing US commodities.

LONDON COMMODITIES

Table listing London commodities.

SPOT MARKET METALS (US)

Table listing spot market metals.

NEW YORK METAL FUTURES

Table listing New York metal futures.

LONDON METAL FIXES

Table listing London metal fixes.

DATA COMMUNICATIONS VIA

Table listing data communications via.

Foreign financial data courtesy of CommStock Trading Ltd.

Table listing foreign financial data.

LONDON

Table listing London market data.

PARIS

Table listing Paris market data.

FRANKFURT

Table listing Frankfurt market data.

NEW YORK

Large table listing New York market data.

NEW YORK

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NEW YORK

Large table listing New York market data.

Large vertical advertisement on the right side of the page for 'Solidity Integrity' and other services.

Handwritten text at the bottom center of the page.

ction ut Maof 4 -0.09% NIS 208 million worth traded. That's 11 percent of the month's daily average...

alls record ge ended up 58.35 points 0.06, standing just below its closing high of 7,782.04...

records might fall els in later trade after a case in its Big Board...

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US asks to see Peled over Arafat link to WTC bombing

By STEVE RODAN

The Clinton administration has asked the government for permission to meet with Deputy Education Minister Moshe Peled to discuss his assertion in March that Yasser Arafat was privy to the 1993 attempt to blow up New York's World Trade Center, in which six people were killed.

Sources said the US request, which PEUGEOT 1991 3098X, 45,000 km., air conditioning, excellent condition. NIS 29,000. Tel. 050-241-492.

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came from Attorney-General Janet Reno to her counterpart Elyakim Rubinstein, asked for an urgent meeting between an American government representative and Peled. The sources said the administration has come under pressure from the US Congress to investigate Peled's assertion.

"There is a lot of pressure in Congress to use this information as the smoking gun to stop all US aid to the Palestinian Authority," a diplomatic source said.

The source said Rubinstein approved the US request to question Peled after the deputy minister agreed as well. Under Israeli law, the attorney-general has to approve the investigation of any national by a foreign power.

Rubinstein, through Justice Ministry spokesman Ety Eshed, confirmed that he met with Peled concerning the US request.

"In accordance with a request from the international department of the US Attorney-General's Office, the [Rubinstein] turned to Peled," Eshed said. She did not elaborate.

A source in the Prime Minister's Office said Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has not been involved in the contacts between Israel and the US regarding Peled. The source said the forthcoming meeting should not be construed as an attempt by the Netanyahu government to damage Arafat or try to stop US aid to the PA.

A source said that US investigators will also be meeting with intelligence sources and a media source who lived in the Arab world.

In March, Peled told the Post

that Israeli intelligence has evidence that Arafat arrived in Khartoum several days before the World Trade Center bombing and attended the discussions of the plot held by Sudanese leaders and Islamic terrorist operatives.

Peled's assertion sparked calls in US Congress for an investigation into Arafat's role in the conspiracy. On April 1, Sen. Arlen Specter, former chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, sent a letter to Reno asking for an investigation.

"It appears to me, that if true, Arafat would be prosecutable under US criminal laws," Specter wrote. "I would appreciate your advice as to what indictments could be brought as to Chairman Arafat."

On April 29, Assistant Attorney-General Andrew Foits responded that the Justice Department is unaware of Arafat's involvement in the conspiracy, adding that Israeli authorities deny the accuracy of the statements attributed to Peled. The deputy minister, following his interview with the Post, reiterated his assertion to several Israeli radio stations.

Specter countered that the attorney-general's response was insufficient and called in Congress for a genuine investigation into Peled's remarks.

Sources said Peled has consistently referred government officials to Israeli intelligence agencies.

Asked last night whether he will meet with a US official to discuss Arafat's role in the bombing, the deputy minister said, "I am not going to comment. This is not something I want to discuss or even confirm."

Knesset to get list of MKs to be questioned in Ben-Ari case

By RAINE MARCUS

National Investigations chief Cmdr. Sando Mazor will meet with Knesset Speaker Dan Tichon on Sunday to provide him with a list of public figures - cabinet ministers and Knesset members - whom police wish to summon to give evidence in the Zvi Ben-Ari (also known as

Gregory Lerner) case, and to discuss procedures.

The list is expected to contain more than 10 politicians, from the Likud, Labor, and Yisrael Ba'aliya parties, who police believe can shed light on Ben-Ari's activities and alleged financial crimes here.

Mazor emphasized that, at this stage, none of those summoned

will be questioned under caution, but will simply be asked to give evidence.

Police are concentrating on financial crimes allegedly committed by Ben-Ari here, namely tax fraud, violating banking laws, and his connection to an \$85 million scam allegedly carried out in Russia. Politicians, including ministers, are expected to be summoned starting next week to the National Crimes Squad's Petah Tikva headquarters.

The first to give evidence was former Labor Party secretary-general Nissim Zvili, who met with Ben-Ari three times after the latter offered him and the party free air time on Russian television for Labor propaganda campaigns. Zvili refused. Since then, because of the sensitivity of the case, police have postponed summoning other public figures.

Regarding suspicions that Ben-Ari was responsible for the murder of a banker in Russia and the plot to kill another, police here have frozen the investigation for lack of cooperation from their Russian counterparts and since the crimes were committed abroad.

Police now have to persuade Attorney-General Elyakim Rubinstein to authorize the further remand of Ben-Ari this Sunday, when he is due to appear in Petah Tikva Magistrate's Court. Rubinstein already authorized a further remand after Ben-Ari had been in custody for 30 days, as is required by law.

The Jerusalem Post's

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Israel's 50th anniversary is fast approaching. To commemorate this milestone, The Jerusalem Post presents the "Find the Founders" contest

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This contest will appear again in the June 25th and 27th editions. You are welcome to enter as many times as you wish. All entries must be postmarked no later than June 30, 1997, and be filled out on the original newspaper form (no photocopies or faxes will be accepted).

Only correctly circled puzzles accompanied by fully-completed forms will be entered into the grand prize draw which will be held on July 10, 1997.

The first correct, fully-completed entry drawn will win the washer-dryer set, the second the refrigerator, and the third the T.V.

Jerusalem Post staff, their families and distribution agents are not eligible. Failure to fill in all of the details on the form disqualifies the entry.

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FUNDS

Scholarships help new immigrants

By BEVERLEE BLACK

"It is better to give than to receive." This was the feeling Bentzi Miller, our Tel Aviv office manager, and I had when we went to Bar-Ilan University last week to present each of 12 students, many of them new immigrants, with a check for NIS 2,500 to help further their education.

The NIS 30,000 came from your donations to the Welcome Home Fund. We've also given NIS 30,000 to eight students at the Ben-Gurion University of the Negev.

Education is the key to a successful society, and ensuring that new immigrants are not left on the sidelines is the reason for our Welcome Home Fund.

I'm very concerned at the slow pace of contributions and I appeal to all our readers and their friends not to let those in need be left out.

We've been receiving many requests to help fund summer activities for both youngsters and senior citizens. Without your support, we won't be able to participate, and many of them will be disappointed.

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CS36 In honor of Rav Gemara - The Agnon Group, Toronto, Canada.
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\$50 In memory of Rabbi John J. Zucker - Sylvia Warner, Campo, CA.
\$18 In honor of the Refusenikim from everywhere - Rob Pliskin, Akron, OH.
\$10 In memory of my father, Morris Rubin, and in honor of the 90th birthday celebration of Rabbi David L. Silver, both of Keshet Israel Synagogue, Harrisburg, PA - Gerald Rubin, Lynchburg, VA.
CS15 In honor of Binyamin Netanyahu - R. Asper, Winnipeg.

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Donations	Totals
NIS 170	NIS 25,935
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ews Editors: Joseph

Maxim Levy, UTJ clash over appointment

By LIAT COLLINS

While the coalition is reeling under the fallout of Dan Meridor's resignation, the conversion bill issue, Yisrael Ba'aliya's demands that its preferred candidate be appointed ambassador to Russia, and the lingering Bar-On Affair, a new crisis is in the offing. Geshet's Maxim Levy has resurrected an old dispute which could cause a showdown with United Torah Judaism.

Levy has announced he intends to submit his candidacy to a position on the committee which elects religious court judges. The position became vacant with the recent death of MK Avraham Stern (National Religious Party).

Last November, the elections for the Knesset's two appointees to the panel seriously rocked the coalition. Under the coalition agreement, one of the two committee members chosen by the Knesset must be from United Torah Judaism, but its candidate, Moshe Gafni, failed to get elected after several more coalition MKs, including Levy, put themselves forward for the post. Stern was elected as the coalition's appointment along with Labor's Uzi

Gafni: We'll abide by convert deal

By HAIM SHAPIRO

The religious parties will abide by the compromise agreement between the Conservative and Reform movements and the government on the conversion bill, even though they do not agree to it in principle.

This was made clear yesterday by MK Moshe Gafni (United Torah Judaism), who said that his party would wait until June 30, to see if the petition regarding the conversion of adopted infants by Conservative rabbis is brought before the High Court. If it is not, Gafni said, his party would agree to delay action on the bill "for some weeks."

According to the agreement, the Reform and Conservative are to suspend their petitions to the High Court, while a joint committee, including a representative each of the Conservative and Reform movements and five members from the coalition will reach a compromise agreement by September 15.

Gafni said his party does not agree to the participation of Conservative and Reform rabbis in the committee. "The coalition should come to a decision by itself, as with any other law," he said.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that he believes the



Marlene Post, world president of Hadassah, yesterday presents Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu with a statement calling on him to work speedily for a broad consensus on the issue of religious pluralism. (Joe Malcolin)

issue is on its way to being settled. Speaking at the ceremony establishing an International Center on Jewish Identity at Bar-Ilan University, he said the compromise talks would soon get under way and he believes the results will be positive.

"I don't want this year to be remembered as the year the Jewish people was torn into pieces," he said.

Netanyahu also said he sees the Reform and Conservative as an integral part of the Jewish people. There is no difference between Jew and Jew, and the Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform have valid arguments, he said.

Netanyahu also spoke to the leadership of the World Zionist Organization in Jerusalem, where Hadassah president Marlene Post presented him with a statement

expressing the organization's "distress and dismay over the shocking disintegration of the unity of the Jewish people that we are witnessing in Israel."

She expressed concern that the conversion bill or similar legislation might still be passed and the compromise agreement would only be "yet another Band-Aid which will merely hold back the poison for a few more weeks or months."

WEATHER

Galilee 16-28

Haifa 21-33

Tiberias 21-38

Afula 21-35

Barnas 17-33

Tel Aviv 22-30

Jerusalem 17-32

Beer Sheva 20-36

Dead Sea 21-31

Eilat 24-32

Forecast: Unusually hot temperatures. Shabbat: Temperatures will continue to rise

AROUND THE WORLD

	LOW	HIGH	COND.
Amsterdam	10	18	clear
Berlin	12	22	clear
Buenos Aires	11	24	partly cloudy
Caracas	21	30	clear
Chicago	12	24	clear
Copenhagen	09	17	cloudy
Frankfurt	09	17	cloudy
Geneva	12	24	rain
Helsinki	09	19	clear
Hong Kong	25	29	cloudy
Jakarta	02	26	clear
London	17	24	partly cloudy
Los Angeles	13	26	rain
Madrid	13	26	clear
Moscow	14	24	partly cloudy
Mumbai	23	31	partly cloudy
New York	17	21	partly cloudy
Paris	14	21	cloudy
Rome	17	23	cloudy
Stockholm	09	16	clear
Sydney	09	16	clear
Tokyo	20	28	partly cloudy
Toronto	13	21	partly cloudy
Vienna	14	25	partly cloudy
Zurich	10	22	cloudy

Conservative Movement condemns lesbian marriage ceremony

By HAIM SHAPIRO

Israel's Conservative movement yesterday condemned a marriage between two women performed by a Reform rabbi on Wednesday night, saying that it had crossed the "red line" in terms of Halacha (Jewish law) and it was a mistake to carry out such a marriage at this time.

The ceremony was performed in Tel Aviv by Rabbi David Ariel-Joel, rabbi of Jerusalem's Har-El Congregation. During the ceremony, held under a tallit (prayer shawl), the two women exchanged rings

and each broke a glass.

Rabbi Einat Ramon, spokeswoman of the Conservative movement, said the movement opposes such rituals. "We see no way, according to Halacha, to make homosexual marriage a halachic norm, even though we recognized the rights of the gay community for civil rights," Ramon said, adding that it would also be a mistake to make such a marriage a norm, especially at a time when heterosexual marriage had to be supported.

Although Ramon did not mention the talks which were still continuing yesterday

between the coalition and Reform and Conservative movements over a compromise agreement regarding conversions carried out by the two movements in Israel, she did say that she thought the timing of the marriage ceremony was "irresponsible."

MK Moshe Gafni (United Torah Judaism) said yesterday the wedding between two women is just additional proof that the Reform movement is only interested in destroying Judaism.

"The Reform are not really interested in conversion or marriage or in helping peo-

ple. They are only interested in overturning Judaism," Gafni said. The Reform, he said, had rejected the Torah, which was the basis of Jewish survival during all the centuries of persecution.

The Council of Progressive Rabbis, the central body of Reform rabbis, yesterday denied the ceremony had been a marriage, but rather a "bonding ceremony" intended to make the relationship public. Rabbi Yoram Mazor, secretary of the CPR, said that Ariel-Joel had allowed a tallit to be used as a canopy, contrary to the decision of the CPR, but there had been no tradi-

tional marriage contract, no wedding blessings, and the rings had been exchanged without halachic formulas.

Mazor said the CPR had been discussing homosexual ceremonies during the past two years, and while its rabbis had expressed themselves in favor of the basic need of every human being for love, warmth, and companionship, it sees the sanctity of the union of marriage between a man and a woman as the ideal. The CPR sees no possibility of conducting homosexual marriage ceremonies according to the law of Moses and Israel, Mazor said.

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Bostoner Rebbe: Quit the habit

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